

CATCH a spark!

Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



The Magic in Changing Your Stars

Written by Leah Henderson

304 pages / Ages 8-12

A magical, fast-paced time travel novel that takes readers back to 1939 Harlem, celebrating the arts by weaving together magic and historical fiction, recognizing special family relationships and sharing a powerful message about the importance of believing in yourself.

C

Context

Black Excellence

Over 40 African American people and places are cited in the novel.

Character names and places are all inspired by prominent figures throughout history, with an index included to cite them all and give very brief background.

Character personalities align with the personalities of the original figure as you read about them in the index.

A

Arts

Tap dancing is front and center. Students will inevitably want to give it a try and learn more about it.

The ease and natural rhythm of **rap** music - writing it and performing it.

Character names inspired by prominent African American artists will inspire conversation.

T

Themes

Believing in yourself

Grit

Potential and possibility

Having the power to change your own fate.

C

Create

Write your own rap to inspire and motivate yourself. Use Chapters 23 and 31 as examples.

Interview a special family member about an event in their past they would redo if they had the chance. Write that story.

Research a figure or place highlighted in the novel.

H

Heart Words

pg 42: "Never is a word I should never use...because it limits my possibilities"

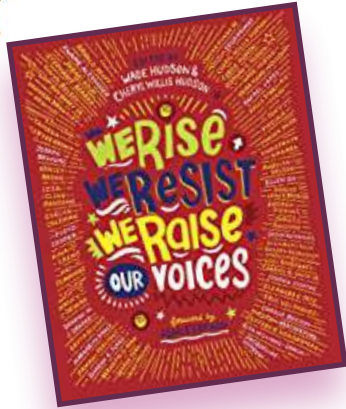
pg 46: "Know your history...so you can know yourself"

pg 64-65 "It's grit that keeps you going. It won't let nothin' stop you or stand in your way....Point is, you can't give up when you get knocked down"



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We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices

Edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson

96 pages / Grades 2 - 8

Every classroom should have a copy of this book in which 50 prevalent and diverse children's authors and illustrators share their unique voices to bring hope and promise to today's children through original prose, poetry and illustration with the intent of building better tomorrows.

C

Context

This book was inspired in 2016 by a 7 year old girl who expressed great concern at the state of the world and the ways in which people treated each other.

The book was created to ensure she knew that even during dark and bleak times, there is a sense of hope, love and resilience in the world. Issues of **diversity, kindness, and respect** are faced head on through **current events** expressed through **prose, poetry, lyrics** and illustration, with each page a different written style.

A

Arts

There is an abundance of **illustration styles**. As you are reading, create a master list of styles and techniques.

Why do you think each style was paired with its writing?

Look at each set of pages. Consider the **color scheme** provided. How is it all connected? Do the main colors of each set of pages seem to align with what the words are saying? What do you think were determining factors in the **page layout**? How colors determined? What draws **focus** in each illustration?

T

Themes

Hope

Resilience

Community Spirit

Adults who have lived through similar times can offer advice to today's children.

Challenges come and go, but you cannot lose your sense of direction.

Endurance

Kindness

Be brave

C

Create

Choose a question that begins each page and write your own response.

Read one page of text to students, without showing illustrations. Have each student create a visual representation (in any style) to go with the piece.

Compare their work to their peers, and to the original picture.

Consider a current event. Discuss which piece seems to align best with that event.

Write a song to sing to their future children about today's world. Use page 65 for guiding thoughts.

H

Heart Words

pg 14: "Our lives have created a map you can always follow."

pg 30: "What do we do with the worry, the hurt, the rage? We turn it into something bigger than us. We turn it into change."

pg 47: "Have a day of small things."

pg 53 "So tuck in, stay close, grow strong, We're here. Your wind. And you? You're our coming storm."

pg 59: "Any dream can happen, the world is yours to win."



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How to Build a Hug

Written by Amy Guglielmo / Illustrated by Giselle Potter
96 pages / Grades 2 - 5

All grade levels will take something away from this real story about Temple Grandin, a celebrated scientist and autism advocate who inspires others to acknowledge and embrace what makes each person different and unique.

C

Context

Temple Grandin is known around the world for her work and advocacy for awareness of autism. Being a person with autism herself, Temple has learned how to use her own experiences to **celebrate** and **acknowledge** the ways in which she is **different from others**, a skill we could all learn from.

It is through seeing what other people enjoy and wanting a similar experience that Temple uses her own creativity and **design thinking** capabilities to create her own comforts.

A

Arts

Giselle Potter is a celebrated children's author, having illustrated numerous books. Her **style** is uniquely her own - a bit of folk art, a bit childlike and whimsical, yet always captivating. What is it about this artist, whose work is a bit different, that aligns so nicely with the story of Temple Grandin?

Temple Grandin **thinks in pictures**. What would that be like. Discuss creativity. How do students think? Do some see words in their head? Pictures? Both?

T

Themes

Embracing your unique self.

Finding ways to solve problems that work for you / alternate solutions.

Accepting and tolerating other's different learning and living styles.

Creative thinking

Understanding others

Being self-sufficient

C

Create

Think about something you do not like that everyone else you know does like. Try to recognize WHY you don't like it.

Can you create/ design/build something to let you experience it in a way that would work for you? Celebrate this part of you - don't hide it!

Think of an abstract concept (like a hug). Create a list of "definitions" for it as you try to understand what it really means. Turn this into a poem. Uses pages 12-13 as examples.

H

Heart Words

Author's Note: *"I use my mind to solve problems and invent things - Temple Grandin"*

Last page: *"I'm into hugging people now."*

pgs 30-31: *"It's a snuggle apparatus... It's a hug machine."*



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Firebird

Written by Misty Copeland / Illustrated by Christopher Myers
96 pages / Grades K- 5

Acclaimed ballerina Misty Copeland speaks to a young dancer lacking in confidence and shows her the importance of confidence, hard work and determination. Told through vivid and unique illustrations combined with lyrical prose, Misty's signature role of the Firebird becomes a symbol of hope and perseverance.

C

Context

In 2015, **Misty Copeland** became the **first African American woman to become a principal ballerina** for the American Ballet Theatre, where her first leading role was in *Firebird*. Misty's path to success was not an easy one personally or professionally as she regularly faced issues of **diversity**. She has been featured in many documentaries, news segments and magazines, becoming an advocate and mentor for children and an author of three books.

A

Arts

Award winning illustrator Christopher Myers creates **bold, vivid, purposeful illustrations**.

Discuss **artistic choices**. How does layering and **collage** amplify the words on each page? What **techniques** do you notice?

Myers is also a clothing designer. Does this skill affect the illustrations? Do you notice a sense of **texture**?

Ballet is front and center. What do students know about ballet? Discuss the years of dedication and focus required.

T

Themes

Beauty of dance, beauty of you.

Beauty of art is found within yourself.

Feeling empowered to be whatever you wish to be.

There are no limits, but only endless possibilities.

Movement can shed fear.

Self-confidence will lead you wherever you wish to go

Importance of hard working dedication.

C

Create

Write about who is Misty is speaking to. Why do you think so? How can you support your thinking?

Choose a page of text and create your own illustration for it.

Choose a page of text. Let those lines be a story starter for your own creative writing piece.

Play the music "Firebird". Does the music align with the message of the story? Does it align with the illustrations?

Can you design a movement for each page?

H

Heart Words

"the space between you and me is longer than forever"

"your beginning's just begun"

"we will wrap our hearts careful as ribbons on pointe shoes."

Author's Note: "I hope to pave a more definitive path than then that was there for me but was just a little too hidden."

